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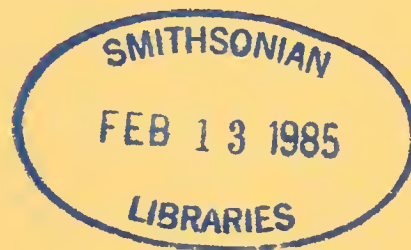


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# CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN INDIAN PAINTINGS

FROM THE  
MARGRETTA S. DIETRICH  
COLLECTION



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Contemporary American  
Indian painting from  
the Margretta S. Dietrich  
collection

We take great pleasure in welcoming you to this exhibit of contemporary American Indian paintings from the Margretta S. Dietrich collection.

Notes on the artists and a listing of the works on display are given in the back portion of this pamphlet.

We hope you will enjoy this exhibit.



# American Indian Paintings

by Dorothy Dunn

Curator of the Margretta S. Dietrich Collection of Contemporary Indian Painting

This exhibition is comprised of paintings by cotemporary American Indian artists, most of whom live in the ancient pueblos (villages) of the semi-arid Southwest area of the United States. A small number of works represent the Great Plains region of the Missouri River Valley and the Woodland area east of that.

The paintings, while modern in general appearance and individually inventive, derive from the oldest painting traditions in America. Prehistoric works have contributed to these timely expressions from many sources such as pictographs, pottery motifs, ceremonial murals, sand-paintings, and hide paintings. Imaginative use of the old material combined with recent experiences has resulted in new interpretations of abstract designs and more objective views of ceremonial and secular life.

Brush and spray techniques used in these pictures were natively developed with earth colors in prehistoric times. Flat painted surfaces and linear patterns in opaque colors have been characteristic of American Indian painting for centuries.

Paintings from the Southwest include works by artists of the Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache tribes of New Mexico and Arizona. From the Pueblo Tribe, the village dwellers, come conventionally ordered portrayals of ceremonials of growth, harvest, and the hunt; seminaturalistic genre scenes; decorative flora and fauna; and old abstract figures which once symbolized prayers for rain. Corn and Gourd dancers display designs and gestures symbolic of rain, and even the "Shinny Game" illustrates a seed fertility ceremony for the fields. Many paintings of animals or animal impersonators—buffalo, deer, turtle, and various birds—emphasize the importance of game animals and rain-associated crea-

tures to Pueblo life. The Pueblo pantheon of supernatural characters is introduced in a striking cast of masked Katchinas, the Kossa, and Koshare, all impersonators. Aboriginal abstract designs emerge in such compositions as "Hunter" and "Rainbow God," each showing cloud and rain symbols, among others.

Navajo paintings show the most important figures, the Yei (gods), who participate in the Yeibicai, the great communal healing ceremonial. "N'da-a" depicts another principal rite, one of semi-social aspect involving hundreds of participants. The Navajo's beloved sheep and horses characteristically appear in these works. Small glimpses of mountain spots in the vast, rugged Navajo country are idealized in two scenes.

The once nomadic Apache Tribe is pictured in the camp and battle-field of old. Even though long settled on government reservations, the Apaches still recount in paintings and ceremonies the events of their roving days.

Plains artists, too, still stylistically influenced by paintings once made on buffalo hides, depict views of war parties and tribal exploits. The eagle, sacred to all North American tribes, is still dramatized in Plains tribal dances such as seen in Keahbone's dramatic eagle figure.

Painting in the Woodland area is not a tradition of depth, although the usually quiet, decorative character of Woodland design in other media has influenced modern pictorial developments. Both ceremonies and genre scenes are favorite subjects of today's Woodland painters.

The contemporary artists are not the Indians popularly known through historical account and folklore. Neither are they the Indians of anthropological record. Most of them have been well educated in American schools and colleges. Very

few have had regular art courses, although the majority have participated in creative Indian art developments in the Santa Fe Indian School. A number—perhaps seven or eight—are entirely self-advanced as painters.

Some artists have chosen to remain on the tribal reservations. Particularly is this true of the Pueblo Indians whose agrarian life in many respects is basically like that preceding the Spanish conquest, even though the native pattern does alter in degrees varying with outer pressures and dominant influences. Others move in the general stream of American life while retaining a knowledge and appreciation of their distinctive cultural heritage. Although all might paint in international styles, these artists prefer to offer to American art contributions uniquely their own, and which they

know would be forever lost should they not do so.

The modern school had its first indications in drawings and paintings on paper and cloth done by Plains Indians at the close of the buffalo era when hides ceased to be available. Dynamic renderings of battles, memoirs of inter-tribal exploits, and nostalgic reminiscences of youth and childhood in the old free days gave rise to a new art that had suddenly departed from ceremonial dictate or utilitarian purpose, but which served mainly as an expression of the individual for himself. However, not having been recognized as art, most of these early works were destroyed in the tumultuous ending of traditional Plains life. Fortunately, a considerable number of the pictures, collected mainly by army personnel as *curiosa* found their way into museums.





## *BEN QUINTANA*

Ben Quintana, when he was fifteen years old was the winner of the American Youth Prize awarded by the American Magazine of Art. He was chosen for this \$1,000 prize in competition with 50,000 contestants. His untimely death in the World War II battle of Leyte prevented his accepting a scholarship to Stanford University.

## ALLAN HOUSER

Allan Houser, one of the first graduates of the U.S. Indian School, is currently the head of its painting and sculpture classes. Among his many prizes are a Guggenheim Fellowship, the American Society of Medalists Award, and the French *Palmes Academiques*. He has had several one-man shows and is the illustrator of several books.

Leaving Camp. 1937





Men's Arrow Dance. 1945

*JOE HERRERA (see-Ru)*

Joe Herrero is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and the University of New Mexico. He achieved great success as a painter, was awarded first prize in several shows, and received the French medal, Palmes Academiques. He is now

an official of the New Mexican Department of Education and the secretary of the All Pueblo Council. Because of his many official duties he no longer finds time to paint but he hopes to return to painting soon.



G. Talahytewa - 52  
Hopi

*GIBSON TALAHYTEWA*

Gibson Talahytewa, a graduate of the U.S. Indian School, worked in Santa Fe and painted as a hobby. He later returned to the Hopi country where he continues to paint, but no longer enters the competitions.

## ANDY TSIHNAHJINNIE

Andy Tsihnaahjinnie has followed a painting career since 1932. In 1933 he was one of the artists who took part in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) art project. The American Magazine of Art published one of his paintings before his graduation from the U.S. Indian School. He has received awards from the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa and the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico, as well as the *Palmes Academiques* of the French Government.

Navajo N'da-a. 1938





Navajo Girl with Sheep. 1940



Antelope Grazing. 1940

## HARRISON BEGAY

Harrison Begay, a graduate of the United States Indian School, now lives on the Navajo reservation. He is a prolific painter whose work appears in most major exhibitions of Indian painting, and is consistently awarded prizes. In 1954 he was awarded the *Palmes Academiques* medal by the French Government.



**Mythical Horse No. 1. 1940**

### *POP-CHALEE*

Pop Chalee is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and one of the best known Indian artists. Until about six years ago she painted steadily and her work was in great demand. She now lives in California, but unfortunately, finds no time to paint.



### *GEORGE KEAHBONE*

George Keahbone, an expert woodworker, has only recently achieved success as a painter. Since his graduation from the U.S. Indian School in the 1930s, he and his wife, the Taos artist Tonita Lujan, have made their home in Santa Fe. He now exhibits at the annual shows in Santa Fe where he has won several prizes.



# Paintings on Display

*GILBERT ATENCIO*, San Ildefonso Pueblo

1. **Shinny Game. 1946**
2. **Snowbird Dancers. 1946**

Gilbert Atencio is a graduate of the Studio, U.S. Indian School, Santa Fe and studied further in academic art courses in California. He lives and paints now in San Ildefonso Pueblo. He has received prizes from the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa; Museum of New Mexico; Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico; Scottsdale National Exhibition, Arizona.

*AWA TSIREH*, San Ildefonso Pueblo

3. **Black Masked Dancer. 1930**
4. **Corn Dancers and Kossa. 1940**
5. **Turkey and Rainbow. 1935**

Awa Tsireh, an active painter up to his death in 1955, was from 1917-19 one of the founders of the Modern Indian School. He was largely self-taught and in his youth was one of the first Indian painters to exhibit. Because his works were sold as fast as he could paint them, he was seldom represented in later shows. He was considered one of the "old masters" among Indian painters. He did most of his work in his native village of San Ildefonso. In 1954 Awa Tsireh was awarded the French medal, the *Palmes Academiques*.

*HARRISON BEGAY*, Navajo

6. **Antelope Grazing. 1940**
7. **Navajo Feather Dancer. 1947**
8. **Navajo Girl with Sheep. 1940**
9. **Night Chant Gods (Yei). 1938**
10. **Rounding Up Wild Horses. 1938**
11. **Woman with Sheep. 1938**

Harrison Begay, a graduate of the United States Indian School, now lives on the Navajo reservation. He is a prolific painter whose work appears in most major exhibitions of Indian painting, and is consistently awarded prizes. In 1954 he was awarded the *Palmes Academiques* medal by the French Government.

*MANUEL CHAVEZ*, Cochiti Pueblo

12. **Blue Spruce Dancer with Flute. 1938**

Manuel Chavez has not been heard from since his years at the Studio, U.S. Indian School, Santa Fe, where he did outstanding work.

*CHIU-TAH*, Taos Pueblo

**13. Turtle Dance on New Year's Day. 1938**

Chiu-Tah was the foremost painter of Taos Pueblo until his untimely death during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He remained at the U.S. Indian School after his graduation as a teaching assistant until he entered the army. Today his works are much sought after by collectors.

*PATRICK DALLAS*, Hopi

**14. Two Eagle Dancers. 1940**

Patrick Dalls, who rarely painted after leaving school in Santa Fe is seldom represented in the annual shows.

*TRUMAN DAVIS*, Navajo

**15. Eight Deer, Mountain, and Trees. 1937**

Truman Davis no longer paints.

*JOSE J. GARCIA*, Santo Domingo Pueblo

**16. Birds and Trees. 1936**

Jose J. Garcia, a fine artist, lives in Santo Domingo Pueblo where he is not permitted to paint because of tribal taboos.

*PETER GARCIA*, San Juan Pueblo

**17. San Juan Deer Dancers. 1940**

Peter Garcia lives in San Juan Pueblo but has painted little in recent years.

*HA-SO-DE*, Navajo

**18. Antelope Hunt. 1938**

Ha-So-De (Norcisco Abeyta) lives in Gallup, New Mexico, and works for the Employment Service of the State of New Mexico. His work and duties as the head of a large household limit his time for painting. One of the Southwest's outstanding artists, he is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and the University of New Mexico. Recently he won a first prize at the Scottsdale National Exhibition. He has also been shown internationally.

*JOE HERRERA* (see-Ru), Cochiti Pueblo

**19. Hunter. 1954**

**20. Men's Arrow Dance. 1945**

Joe Herrero is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and the University of New Mexico. He achieved great success as a painter, was awarded first prize in several shows, and received the French medal, *Palmes Academiques*. He is now an official of the New Mexican Department of Education and the secretary of the All Pueblo Council. Because of his many official duties he no longer finds time to paint but he hopes to return to painting soon.

*ALLAN HOUSER*, Apache

- 21. Apache Warriors. 1939**
- 22. Leaving Camp. 1937**

Allan Houser, one of the first graduates of the U.S. Indian School, is currently the head of its painting and sculpture classes. Among his many prizes are a Guggenheim Fellowship, the American Society of Medalists Award, and the French *Palmes Academiques*. He has had several one-man shows and is the illustrator of several books.

*TOM JAY*, Hopi

- 23. Proud Katcinas. 1935**

Tom Jay studied at the U.S. Indian School in the 1930s and has since made his home on the Hopi mesas of Arizona.

*KAI-SA*, Zuni

- 24. Apache War Dancers. 1954**
- 25. Early Spring Morning. 1940**

Kai-Sa is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and has won prizes at both the New Mexico Museum and the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial at Gallup, New Mexico. He and his wife have lived at Taos Pueblo since their student days.

*GEORGE KEAHBONE*, Kiowa

- 26. Kiowa Eagle Dancer. 1936**
- 27. Returning from the Warpath. 1936**

George Keahbone, an expert woodworker, has only recently achieved success as a painter. Since his graduation from the U.S. Indian School in the 1930s, he and his wife, the Taos artist Tonita Lujan, have made their home in Santa Fe. He now exhibits at the annual shows in Santa Fe where he has won several prizes.

*KU-PE-RU*, Cochiti Pueblo

- 28. Buffalo Dance. 1939**

Ku-Pe-Ru, a graduate of the U.S. Indian School, now lives and works in

Los Alamos, New Mexico. Although he exhibits in most of the Indian shows, painting has now become a spare-time pursuit. Among his awards is the Grand Prix of the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico.

*TONITA LUJAN*, Taos Pueblo

**29. Taos People at a Round Dance. 1935**

Tonita Lujan is the wife of George Keahbone and a graduate of the U.S. Indian School. She has not painted since 1940.

*MA-PE-WI*, Zia Pueblo

**30. Buffalo Dancer. 1940**

**31. Zia Deer Dancers. 1953**

Ma-Pe-Wi, another of the "Old Masters" and a founder of the Modern School of Indian Painting, no longer paints because of a motor accident in 1956 in which he was severely injured. Until that time he was a prolific painter and continually honored with prizes for his superb work. The Government of France awarded him the *Palme Academique* medal in 1954. He is self-taught, but received much encouragement from the Museum of New Mexico and Santa Fe artists in the 1920s. He lives in Santa Fe.

*STANLEY MITCHELL*, Navajo

**32. Along the Lake. 1936**

Stanley Mitchell operates a trading post in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he does silversmithing but no painting. He is a graduate of the Studio, U.S. Indian School.

*POP-CHALEE*, Taos Pueblo

**33. Black Forest No. 1. 1937**

**34. Mythical Horse No. 1. 1940**

Pop Chalee is a graduate of the U.S. Indian School and one of the best known Indian artists. Until about six years ago she painted steadily and her work was in great demand. She now lives in California, but unfortunately finds no time to paint.

*PO-SU-NU*, San Juan Pueblo

**35. Gathering Peppers. 1935**

**36. Pueblo Crafts. 1938**

Po-Su-Nu (Mrs. Geronima Montaya) has enjoyed a very successful career since her graduation from the U.S. Indian School. First, she was assistant to Dorothy Dunn, Founder of the Studio, until Miss Dunn left the school in 1937. Next she became head of the studio until 1962. Po Su Nu gave up painting for many years and devoted herself to raising a family

and teaching. She has now returned to painting and recently received several prizes for her one-man show at the Museum of New Mexico.

*CHARLES PUSHETONEQUA*, Sauk and Fox

**37. Woodland Buffalo Dance. 1942**

Charles Pushetonequa is a graduate of the Studio, U.S. Indian School and a resident of Iowa.

*QUAH-AH* (Tonita Pena), Cochiti Pueblo

**38. Cochiti Gourd Dance. 1939**

**39. Deer Dancer. 1945**

Quah Ah (Tonito Pena), who died in 1949, was the first successful Indian woman painter. Until she was nine years old she lived in her native village of San Ildefonso, she then moved to Cochiti to live with an aunt. A self-taught artist, she sold most of her paintings to patrons in Santa Fe. Although she does not enter the competitions, Tonita Pena has been viewed internationally. She is the mother of a large family including the well-known Indian artist, Joe Herrera, with whom she received the French *Palmes Academiques* award.

*BEN QUINTANA*, Cochiti Pueblo

**40. Buffalo Dance. 1940**

**41. Coshare with Corn Dance Pole. 1939**

Ben Quintana, when he was fifteen years old, was the winner of the American Youth Prize awarded by the American Magazine of Art. He was chosen for this \$1,000 prize in competition with 50,000 contestants. His untimely death in the World War II battle of Leyte prevented his accepting a scholarship to Stanford University.

*CIPRIANA ROMERO*, Cochiti Pueblo

**42. Deer and Tramp Ceremony (Reyes Feast). 1942**

Cipriana Romero lives in Cochiti where she has a family and no longer paints. She is a graduate of the Studio, U.S. Indian School.

*HARRY SAKYESVA*, Hopi

**43. Rainbow God (Kacina). 1947**

Harry Sakyvesva sometimes paints and sells works at home in his Hopi village.

*GIBSON TALAHYTEWA*, Hopi

**44. Humming Bird Dancer. 1952**

**45. Owl Kacina. 1952**

Gibson Talahytewa, a graduate of the U.S. Indian School, worked in Santa Fe and painted as a hobby. He later returned to the Hopi country where he continues to paint, but no longer enters the competitions.

*JIMMY TODDY* (Beatien Yazz), Navajo

**46. Yeibicai Dancers. 1944**

Jimmy Toddy (Beatien Yazz, as he signs his name in his native Navaho), achieved international fame as a young boy by illustrating Alberta Hannum's book, "Spin a Silver Dollar." He has since illustrated many other books and received awards from the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa; the Museum of New Mexico; and the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico. He now resides in Gallup.

*QUINCY TOHOMA*, Navajo

**47. Buffalo. 1938**

Quincy Tohoma (Tahoma), a 1938 graduate of the U.S. Indian School, began painting at 13. His paintings, along with other work from the School, were exhibited nationally and in several European cities. He won top prize at the Philbrook Art Center's First Annual Exhibition of Indian Arts and afterward painted almost exclusively on a commission basis. His paintings are now eagerly sought by collectors of Indian Art. He died in Santa Fe in 1956.

*JOSE REY TOLEDO*, Jemez Pueblo

**48. Corn Dancer. 1939**

Jose Rey Toledo first studied painting at the U.S. Indian School and taught there after his graduation from the University of New Mexico. His present work with the U.S. Public Health Service, Ft. Yates, North Dakota, allows him little time for painting.

*T'O POVE*, San Juan Pueblo

**49. Los Matachines. 1937**

T'o Pove (Lorencita Atencio) studied painting and textile crafts at the U.S. Indian School before graduating in 1937. She taught crafts for many years at both the Santa Fe and Albuquerque Indian Schools and in her native San Juan Pueblo. Because T'o Pove has stopped painting, her works have not appeared in the annual shows for many years.

*ANDY TSIHNAHJINNIE*, Navajo

**50. Navajo N'da-a. 1938**

Andy Tsihnahjinnie has followed a painting career since 1932. In 1933 he was one of the artists who took part in the Work Progress Administration

(WPA) art project. The American Magazine of Art published one of his paintings before his graduation from the U.S. Indian School. He has received awards from the Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa and the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, Gallup, New Mexico, as well as the *Palmes Academiques* of the French Government.

*JIMMIE TRUJILLO*, Taos Pueblo

**51. Hoop Dancer. 1950**

Jimmie Trujillo, a graduate of the Santa Fe Indian School Studio, now lives in Taos Pueblo and paints occasionally.

*TWOITSIE*, Hopi

**52. Climbing Polacca Mesa. 1935**

Twoitsie was an outstanding painter in his student days but has not been in the exhibitions since the 1830s. He is a graduate of the Studio.

*WAKA*, Zia Pueblo

**53. Corn Dance Ceremony. 1938**

**54. Humming Bird Dance. 1940**

**55. Threshing Wheat. 1938**

Waka, who is now a farmer by profession, still finds time to paint in his native San Juan Pueblo. His work is included in both private and museum collections and is often exhibited in the Museum of New Mexico.









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